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End-Semester Status Report-Year 2-Assistive Technology Lab

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End-Semester Status Report Year 2

Assistive Technology Lab

December 22, 2008

**--Beth Rosenberg, Graduate Assistant to Prof. Sandra Flank, Chair,
Educational Technology, School of Education, Pace University**

The Assistive Technology Lab continues to be an extremely significant piece of the Thinkfinity grant. As technology use becomes even more ubiquitous to today's computer user, the challenge to address the specificity of the varying needs of the user remains of paramount importance. The focus of the AT Lab at 163 Williams Street at Pace University is to help students, teacher-candidates, professors and the community with researching, studying and addressing the needs of the community within the area of assistive technology for the user. Various levels of progress have been made this semester regarding the types of equipment the lab needs to function, as well as amassing information for the AT Lab Committee and fulfilling the realization of a working lab.

While wide-ranging types of equipment have been recommended for the lab due to research and a visit to the Westchester Medical Center AT Lab this past summer 2008, a new and edited version of the list of equipment is currently in progress. Part of the reason for the new list of equipment is due to a comprehensive meeting with Mark Surabian, an AT expert in the field who previously spent ten years at the Young Adult Institute for developmentally disabled learners as the Director of Technology. In his current private practice as an AT educational consultant, Mark works with various schools across the five boroughs and Connecticut, has his own website—www.cognitechcafe.com and attends numerous AT conferences across the US. Mark had a meeting with Dr. Sandra Flank and Beth Rosenberg in November 2008 to discuss recommendations for the latest and most important types of equipment the lab should contain. He made many excellent points in terms of possibly borrowing more of the expensive hardware from various companies and of using semester-ware for some software. There were also many considerations that he noted on our initial equipment list related to hardware or software that were outdated or not effective. In this way, the AT equipment list is being redone to reflect Mark's suggestions and technical and educational prowess. A summary of the meeting with Mark Surabian can be found on the BBS (explained below).

All information related to the AT Lab is now located in two areas at Pace. There is now a BBS board at: <http://bb7.csis.pace.edu/webapps/login/> as well as a wfs file at: <https://wfs.pace.edu> that consists of all the files and reports related to the AT Lab. Additional information is added to those sites so that there is now a centralized place to obtain information on the AT Lab.

Professor Jean Coppola from the Technology Systems Department at Pace has been added to the AT Lab Committee with the function of helping to realize the practicalities of wiring, securing and setting up the computers in the lab space. She has previously set up other computer labs at Pace. AT Lab Committee member Professor Richard Kline and Professor Coppola along with

Beth Rosenberg toured the proposed room on the 15th floor of 163 Williams Street in November 2008. One of the main challenges of the room is that there is an open balcony area right outside the selected room for the AT Lab and the windows of the room cannot be locked due to fire codes. This presents a security challenge, as this open balcony is also accessible to other classrooms on the 15th floor so safety of the equipment is compromised. There will need to be some sort of camera security system put in place in the room in case of unlawful entries. Locked cabinets, chairs and desks need to be ordered from storage/maintenance or purchased. The room needs to be wired for computer use as well as for a Smart Board. The systems of entry and locking need to be organized and planned.

In terms of thinking about some publicity for the AT Lab, we have joined forces with the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan and Cognitech Café to support and present a special Assistive Technology Fair for teachers, educators and parents. This AT Fair will be held on Sunday, March 22, 2008 from 3.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. at the JCC Manhattan at 334 Amsterdam Avenue at West 76 Street. Over 100 people are expected to attend this local fair. Information is below and can be found here:

<http://www.jccmanhattan.org/category.aspx?catid=2154>

Technology Resource Fair: Pre K-5

Innovative 'assistive technologies' (AT) can dramatically change the way challenged students, of all abilities, become successful learners during the critical years from preschool to elementary school. Experts in the field will address educators, therapists, and parents on current research in the use of AT for literacy, communications, improving attention, cognitive development, and physical access to educational materials. On exhibit will be a range of effective technologies available with opportunities for "hands-on" demonstrations. Co-sponsored with Cognitech Cafe and Pace University Thinkfinity Initiative.

We plan on having information about the Pace AT Lab prepared for distribution at the fair.

While teacher Samantha Feinman from the School of Education was supposed to give a class on AT in the spring 2008, this has been postponed to a later future semester. Beth Rosenberg is working on a final list of equipment to order for the AT Lab. She is also working on a sys requirement list for the computers; it appears that there are no MAC-based labs on the campus and that the computers will have to be Windows-based. It would be good to be able to dual boot the computers with both systems, but this may not be possible due to the fact that DO-IT does not support Mac machines at Pace.

In a final effort to obtain a little bit more information about AT equipment, Beth will be visiting the United Cerebral Palsy AT Lab on Monday, December 22 at 11 a.m. and will be posting a summary report of findings on the BBS.

The AT Lab is much closer to its realization and within the next few months other particulars of the AT LAB must be clearly mapped out. These include, for example, marketing and staffing.

